

2007 STRATEGY SESSION DRAWS IMPRESSIVE CROWD, SHOWS ENTHUSIASM FOR EFFORT



CURE Executive Director Bob Szabo

On Tuesday, December 12, more than 80 rail customers and supporters gathered at the CURE offices in Washington, D.C., with another dozen or so joining by phone, to review the progress made on the rail customer effort in 2006 and to discuss strategy for 2007 and the new Congress. The meeting attendees represented a wide range of industries, including rural electric, public power and investor-owned utilities, the chemical industry, forest and paper products, agriculture and cement companies. The group heard from the staff of the key Congressional rail customer advocates about the legislative plans of their Members for 2007. Throughout the day, each speaker highlighted the impressive progress the coalition has made this past year and emphasized that 2007 will provide new opportunities for effecting real change in federal policy to benefit rail customers. CURE Executive Director Bob Szabo noted that some of the Congressional leaders of the rail customer effort will gain new positions of power in January,



CURE Executive Committee Member Steve Sharp of Arkansas Electric Cooperative

providing the best opportunities yet for legislative progress. Sheila McLean of Manning Selvage & Lee, CURE's media consultants, noted that in response to the progress made on Capitol Hill, the media has become much more aware of the issues and provided more coverage of rail customer efforts. And, on the grassroots front, Ted Case of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, and Marty Durbin of the American Chemistry Council, noted the dramatic growth in state-based CURE organizations and emphasized the importance of continued development of these efforts.



Marty Durbin of the American Chemistry Council, right, asks a question of the panel of Hill staffers.

Finally, the roundtable discussion with Hill staff allowed the group to hear from these key staff leaders about their plans for 2007. Specifically, the staff discussed the rail competition bills that were introduced during the 109th Congress and will be reintroduced, with slightly revised content, in the new year. The staff provided useful insight on what they believe will be most effective, and relayed enthusiasm for the effort on behalf of their bosses.



Hill staffers discuss 2007 legislative opportunities with the group.

The meeting concluded with a clear recognition of the unique opportunities that 2007 provides for rail customers and a desire to make the most of those opportunities. The discussion was informational and spirited and revealed both rail customer unity and excitement for our mutual efforts in 2007. The discussion was CURE thanks Congressional staff, our presenters and all attendees for their participation on December 12. Please stay tuned for developments in January!

TRADE ASSOCIATION LEADERS GATHER TO DISCUSS 2007 RAIL CUSTOMER CAMPAIGN

Led by Glenn English, CURE Chairman and CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, and Jack Gerard, President and CEO of the American Chemistry Council, a group of trade association leaders gathered in Washington, D.C., on December 8 to discuss the rail customer effort and the prospects for success in 2007. The meeting revealed significant recognition of the problems confronting rail customers and enthusiasm for pursuing the legislative opportunities that will exist in 2007. A second meeting will occur in January 2007.

CURE TO HOST GATHERING OF STATE GRASSROOTS LEADERS ON JANUARY 18, 2007

Save the date! CURE will be hosting a meeting on January 18 of all state CURE group coordinators in Washington, D.C. The meeting will allow the grassroots organizers to meet one another, share their ideas on effective strategies and discuss plans for the enhanced effort in 2007. The meeting will be held at the CURE offices at 1050 Thomas Jefferson St. NW, Seventh Floor, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST. **For more information, or if you are interested in attending, please contact Beckie Whitehead at (202) 298-1959 or rcw@vnf.com.**

CONGRESSIONAL REPUBLICANS ANNOUNCE COMMITTEE POSTS

Committee assignments for the 110th Congress continue to be announced, as the Senate Republicans made their designations and the House Republicans have identified their committee ranking members.

Below is a list of the chair and ranking member of key House and Senate committees, as well as the new assignments for Republican Senators:

House:

Transportation and Infrastructure: James Oberstar (MN-08), Chair; John Mica (FL-07), Ranking Member

Judiciary: John Conyers (MI-14), Chair; Lamar Smith (TX-21), Ranking Member

Energy and Commerce: John Dingell (MI-15), Chair; Joe Barton (TX-06), Ranking Member

Agriculture: Collin Peterson (MN-07), Chair; Bob Goodlatte (VA-06), Ranking Member

Ways and Means: Charles Rangel (NY-15), Chair; Jim McCrery (LA-04), Ranking Member

Appropriations: David Obey (WI-07), Chair; Jerry Lewis (CA-41), Ranking Member

Senate:

Commerce, Science and Transportation: Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Chair; Ted Stevens (R-AK), Ranking Member; Joining the Committee, John Thune (R-SD)

Judiciary: Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Chair; Arlen Specter (R-PA), Ranking Member

Energy and Natural Resources: Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Chair; Pete Domenici (R-NM), Ranking Member; Joining the Committee, Jim DeMint (R-SC), Jeff Sessions (R-AL), Bob Corker (R-TN)

Agriculture: Tom Harkin (D-IA), Chair; Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), Ranking Member; Joining the Committee, Lindsey Graham (R-SC), John Thune (R-SD)

Finance: Max Baucus (D-MT), Chair; Charles Grassley (R-IA), Ranking Member; Joining the Committee, Pat Roberts (R-KS),

Appropriations: Robert Byrd (D-WV), Chair; Thad Cochran (R-MS), Ranking Member; Joining the Committee, Lamar Alexander (R-TN)

All subcommittee assignments will be announced in January.

On behalf of all the CURE staff, we wish you a safe and happy holiday season!

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RAIL REPORT

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